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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [ICTY](#) [SI](#)
SUBJECT: SLOVENIA VIEWS ON BELGRADE'S COOPERATION ON ICTY
AND KOSOVO STATUS TALKS

REF: A. SECSTATE 146343
[1](#)B. LJUBLJANA 565

Classified By: COM Thomas B. Robertson reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Polecon Chief met 13 September with Leon Marc, Head of the Division for South-Eastern Europe at the MFA to discuss Ref. A points. Slovenia's primary interest is in maintaining regional stability, and a close secondary interest is existing and potential economic investments. Marc said Slovenia was worried about Serbia's apparent sense of isolation from the West and its concern for Serbs living in Kosovo. Addressing these concerns will help make progress on Kosovo status talks. Slovenia has active bilateral relations with both Kosovo and Serbia and Foreign Minister Rupel was in Belgrade in July delivering many of the same points listed in reftel. The GOS is of the same mind as the USG on the importance of Serbia's cooperation with the ICTY.
End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Marc (pronounced Marts) traveled to Belgrade with FM Rupel in July and had recently returned from the Contact Group meeting in Sofia (thus the delay in delivering reftel points). He said that Slovenia was unwavering in its belief that Serbia must actively cooperate with the ICTY on turning over war criminals and that restarting discussions with the EU would depend on that.

[1](#)3. (C) Marc thought the Government of Serbia could meet many of the requests laid out in Ref A. On turning over Mladic and other PIFWICS, Marc referred to a paper drafted by EU heads of mission in Belgrade which assessed that Serbian secret services would only begin to truly cooperate on

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turning over war criminals when the Government of Serbia went public on its goal of turning Mladic over to ICTY. He said that if the Government of Serbia was open about this goal and could guarantee there would be no retribution under future governments for police cooperation, the secret services would likely cooperate more effectively. According to Marc, this same report commented on the strong sense of isolation pervading Serbian government and society and the view that Kostunica has not been able to do much to bring Serbs out of this funk because he has been so focused on remaining in his job - a time consuming endeavor. Marc thought it was an excellent idea to get Kostunica to involve the Orthodox church in publicly supporting the arrest of Mladic.

[1](#)4. (C) Focusing on Kosovo status talks, Marc drew some parallels to Northern Ireland. He thought there might be some useful models to draw on in terms of the institutionalized, vertical ties between the Catholics of northern and southern Ireland that could be applied to the undeniable ties between Kosovar Serbs and Belgrade. This

would, of course, be complimentary to the horizontal integration of Serbs in Kosovo. Marc also commented that on the status talks, Kosovars are very pragmatic and they know that EU membership is in the distant future, and therefore, they are less sensitive to European pressures than to pressure from the United States to act maturely and responsibly in negotiations with Serbia.

15. (C) Comment. We can safely count on the GOS to support our positions on both Serbia and Kosovo, and on balance, to do and say the right things both privately and publicly. Foreign Minister Rupel, however, is known to nuance his comments to appeal to the local audience, which can seem unhelpful. Marc commented that on their July visit to Belgrade, President Tadic told Rupel that he was "frustrated by certain Slovenian officials using the word independence in various contexts." According to Marc, Tadic said that Serbia knows what will happen but is watching what others are saying, and in 2007 Serbia will be "another country" with investment potential. This seemed to be a not-so-oblique warning that they are taking note of who they think are their friends and will act accordingly in the future. Marc said this does give the GOS some pause as Serbia is an important economic partner for Slovenia.

16. (C) Comment Continued. In the last two years, the Slovenian MFA has had no fewer than four Division Heads for South Eastern Europe - many of them also alumni of Yugoslavia's foreign ministry. This rotation is due, most likely, to the fact that FM Rupel takes a strong interest in Balkan policy and is not particularly receptive to counsel on an issue for which he is, for all intents and purposes, the leading national expert. The MFA's newest head of the Division for South Eastern Europe, Leon Marc, is recently returned from four years in Dublin. He is an alumnus of the International Visitor program and speaks excellent English.

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While he has no prior MFA experience with the former Yugoslavia, he demonstrated a good grasp of all the issues. If Marc can manage his relationship with the Foreign Minister and carve out a productive role for himself, he should be an excellent (and lasting) point of contact on Balkan issues.
End Comment.
ROBERTSON